MODULE 2

EFFECTIVE MENTOR-COACH AND PROTÉGÉ RELATIONSHIPS

TUTORED VIDEO INSTRUCTION (TVI)

CONTEXT

Building relationships to promote positive outcomes for children's early literacy and language development is a cornerstone of *Steps to Success*. In this module, you will examine several key concepts that are essential to forming strong, trusting relationships with your protégés. The concepts include sharing and appreciating values, understanding how adults learn, implementing culturally sensitive practices, overcoming biases, and asking questions that encourage reflection. As you adopt and apply the concepts, you will be better able to initiate and sustain effective mentor-coaching relationships with protégés.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By completing this module, Mentor-Coaches will:

- Apply knowledge about how adults learn to support protégés who have different learning styles.
- Demonstrate respect for the values, experiences, and backgrounds of protégés.
- Use culturally and linguistically sensitive practices with children, families, and colleagues.
- Recognize and promote positive early literacy and language outcomes for children along the birth to age five developmental continuum.

INTRODUCTION TO BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Effective mentor-coaching in *Steps to Success* is defined by strong, trusting, and supportive relationships between Mentor-Coaches and protégés. Together, you and your protégés will understand and apply theory to practice and explore questions, issues, and mutual needs. You will learn and grow together in a professional context.

VIDEO CLIP: Testimonials

You will now view a video montage of Mentor-Coaches and protégés in Head Start and Early Head Start as they speak about what their work together has meant to them. Each voice highlights the value of mentor-coaching from its individual perspective.

The video will be used to begin a discussion about mentor-coaching.

The facilitator will guide you in discussing these questions.

Discussion Questions on Testimonials

1.	Which of the testimonials did you find most meaningful?
2.	What did you learn about mentor-coaching from the speakers?



Elements That Support Strong, Trusting Relationships

- Knowledge and appreciation of diverse adult learning styles and values
- Clear communication
- Use of effective mentor-coaching skills
- Practices that encourage self-reflection
- Culturally and linguistically sensitive approaches and self-reflection about biases
- Understanding and agreeing about roles and expectations
- Positive attitudes toward cooperation and growth
- Resourcefulness
- Consistent, ongoing meetings and reflective conferences and adherence to scheduling
- Confidentiality.

VALUES APPRECIATION

When we have children in our care, we need to act in a respectful manner and to demonstrate respect toward the child, others and ourselves. Keep in mind that children are learning all the time from what we do and that we are their role models for learning respect. By demonstrating respect in all aspects of our lives—our children will learn how to respect all life.

—Wakanyeja WoAwanka Manual (2001)

Mentoring, or the sharing of wisdom, is an age-old tradition in many cultures around the world. The teachings of the elders are passed down (often through oral tradition) to the younger ones and are cherished from generation to generation. Mentoring is, in fact, the way culture and values are often shaped and transmitted from one generation to the next. As we grow and develop, we each carry values that we were taught as children. Many values we have kept, and some we have let go along the way. We also adopt new values as we learn and experience more along the journey of our lives.

In our homes, our communities, and in our professions, we are living and passing on values every day. As a Mentor-Coach, you share your wisdom with protégés. Protégés, by sharing their values and beliefs, help you to grow and learn. Mentor-Coaches and protégés in Head Start and Early Head Start work closely with parents to convey values and a positive sense of self to children.

What do we mean by values in a cultural context? Here is an example.

There are seven values in the Lakota American Indian Nation. They reflect a way of life for the people and are the foundation of Lakota culture. The seven values have been taught and practiced for centuries.

The Lakota values are:

- Generosity
- Compassion
- Respect
- Wisdom
- Humility
- Patience
- Courage
 - --Wakanyeja WoAwanka Manual (2001)

Discussion Questions on Values Appreciation

Your facilitator will guide you in a discussion of these four questions. Once you have finished writing your responses, you will pair up with another person and share your answers to the third question.

1.	What values did you learn in your family of origin?
2.	What are some values that you have newly adopted?
3.	Which do you still hold dear?
4.	How do you apply these values to your work with children and families?

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND REFLECTIVE INQUIRY

It made it a lot more possible for me to be culturally sensitive with the children and families in my program because I had a Mentor-Coach. She helped me to have the confidence to talk about some things that I was afraid to discuss before. She even gave me support to try again when I made mistakes. I think all of the children do better when they feel good about who they are.

—Protégé

Mentor-Coaches and protégés, like the children and families with whom you work, speak different languages and come from many different places and backgrounds. Since Mentor-Coaches and protégés often come from different cultural backgrounds and speak a variety of languages, there is much to learn about each other's cultural heritage. It is important to gain knowledge about each other's roots. This knowledge helps you to understand and appreciate one another. When differences emerge between you and your protégés, you will be more prepared to negotiate them and reach understandings and solutions. And remember that differences can also enrich the Mentor-Coach and protégé relationship. Enjoy building cross-cultural relationships in mentor-coaching!

To understand what it means to be culturally sensitive with children, begin by learning about the home languages, cultural rituals, and the values and priorities parents want their children to learn and live by. Ask yourself, "What are the cultural expectations that this family has for their child?" When you infuse the cultural knowledge gained from parents into your daily plans and practices with children, you are being culturally sensitive. You also provide culturally consistent early education and care when you work with parents to replicate home routines in early learning environments.

Definition: Cultural Sensitivity

Culture is the fundamental building block of identity. Through cultural learning, children gain a feeling of belonging, a sense of personal history, and a security in knowing who they are and where they come from . . . Early child care that respects time-honored cultural rules helps children develop a secure sense of self. In essence, the gifts children receive from an infancy firmly grounded in their home culture are confidence, competence, and connection. For children to receive these gifts, culturally sensitive care is crucial.

—P. L. Mangione, J. R. Lally, and S. Signer (1993)



Discussion Questions on Cultural Sensitivity

Use these questions with your facilitator to develop a shared understanding of cultural sensitivity.

What do culturally sensitive practices mean to you?	
2. How do you use and support them in your work?	
Refer to STEP-Doc 1.2a: Ten Keys to Culturally Sensitive Chil ways to help ensure that children receive culturally sensitive early care. The ten keys can guide you in implementing culturally sensitive with families and staff members.	education and

REFLECTIVE INQUIRY

It took time for me to develop my reflective inquiry skills with my protégé. In my mentor training it was always emphasized. I even saw a role play of it. After lots of practice, I began to use it regularly with my protégé. And it really worked! It made it easier for me to depend on my protégé to follow through in the classroom on her new ideas and goals, rather than ones I suggested to her.

—Mentor

Reflective Inquiry means asking thoughtful questions that bring about thoughtful answers. It involves careful listening during meetings with your protégé. As you listen, you can ask questions that encourage your protégé to think about experiences, to expand on an idea, or to imagine a next step or new outcome. When a Mentor-Coach uses reflective inquiry, the protégé's thinking fuels the discussion.

The more opportunities you and your protégé have to discuss what is happening or has happened, the more you begin to identify other ways of handling similar situations. You are not expected to direct your protégé's activities, but rather to guide and help your protégé make, implement, and evaluate decisions. Refer to **STEP-Doc 1.2 b: Questions That Promote Reflection,** for examples of questions to use when engaging in reflective inquiry.

Practice using reflective inquiry in your everyday life. For instance, when listening to a friend or colleague share a problem with you, ask some questions to help her or him figure out what to do about it. Ask questions like:

- 1. What are you hoping to achieve?
- **2.** What have you tried before?
- 3. How could you do that differently?

You may find that reflective inquiry strengthens and improves communication in all of your personal and professional relationships.

VIDEO CLIP: Cultural Sensitivity and Reflective Inquiry

You will now see a video clip that illustrates culturally sensitive activities in a tribal classroom at Cay-Uma-Wa Head Start in Pendleton, Oregon. At the time of taping, the spring salmon are running in a tributary of the Columbia River, which intersects the community. The video focuses on a meeting between Susan, a Mentor-Coach, and Linda, a protégé. Susan engages Linda in reflective inquiry about her curriculum, including print awareness concepts.



Discussion Questions on Cultural Sensitivity and Reflective Inquiry

Your facilitator will guide you in a discussion of the video clip by posing the following questions. Take a few minutes to respond to them.

1.	What are the indicators of cultural sensitivity in this video clip?
2.	How did the Mentor-Coach use reflective inquiry?
3.	What are your impressions of the relationship between the Mentor-Coach and the protégé?

SELF-REFLECTION AND OVERCOMING BIASES

Bias: Any attitude, belief, or feeling that results in, and helps to justify, unfair treatment of an individual because of his or her identity.

—Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force (1989)

Building a relationship is a process. When building trusting relationships Mentor-Coaches and protégés may encounter real differences and issues, differences in values, priorities, interactions with children and families, and cultural traditions. It may be difficult to relate to each other and come to understandings or reach agreements. This is common. Mentor-Coaches and protégés make a commitment to give it time, and keep trying.

Consider your concerns and issues as they arise. The Mentor-Coaches in the video clip **Self-Reflection and Overcoming Biases** describe how they moved past their initial biases and differences. They reached a clearer understanding and deeper appreciation for their protégés, after some self-reflection and discussion.

VIDEO CLIP: Self-Reflection and Overcoming Biases

Two Mentor-Coaches, Susan from Pendleton, Oregon, and Mercedes from Denver, Colorado discuss changes they made as they overcame their biases about protégés. Listen to them describe their personal changes in letting go of biases they had about their protégés' practices. They share how overcoming		
their biases helped them to grow personally and professionally.		

Discussion Questions on Self-Reflection and Overcoming Biases

Bas	Based on the video you just viewed, consider the following questions:				
1.	What are your impressions of the Mentor-Coaches' experiences?				
2.	Why do you think they were able to make changes?				

In the process of building relationships and gaining knowledge about the different ways that adults learn, about individuals' values, and about how to apply culturally sensitive practices, you will inevitably reflect on your own experiences and approaches. In fact, as a Mentor-Coach, you will learn a lot from your protégés. Self-reflection and interactions with protégés will cause you to rethink old ideas and make new discoveries.

The Mentor-Coach and protégé relationship can be a springboard for change in perspectives and professional practices.

Personal Reflection on Overcoming Biases

On your own time, use these questions to further reflect on your experiences with bias.

1.	Give an example of a bias that you have overcome. How and why did you do it?
2.	Why were you successful?
3.	Are there any biases that you would still like to overcome? Please describe.
4.	What are some strategies that you can use to help you in overcoming the biases that you have identified?

UNDERSTANDING HOW ADULTS LEARN

By helping my protégé understand her own preferred ways to learn, I was helped to work better with her. When I shared how I learned best with my protégé, she knew more about how to work with me. We were able to get along and accomplish much more that way.

--Mentor

You carry your own varied life experiences and ways of teaching and learning with you wherever you go. Each adult brings individual and cultural strengths. These need to be acknowledged, shared, and understood, because they contribute to your relationship with your protégé. Be aware of and honor your own learning style before helping your protégé learn about hers or his. There is no "one right way" to learn. Understanding *how* you learn is as important as understanding *what* you learn.

PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING

- An effective learning-teaching relationship builds on the adult's knowledge and experiences, and recognizes and responds to different ways of knowing.
- All adults bring individual and cultural strengths and experiences with them.
- Adults learn best when new information is integrated with what they already know.
- Adult learning is centered on solving problems.
- All adults benefit from learning activities that involve them fully in understanding, interpreting, and sharing new concepts together.

When you understand your protégé's learning preferences, you are better able to see how the protégé approaches working with children and families. Using the skills you are learning in *Steps to* Success, you can create a comfortable, beneficial relationship that allows a back-and-forth exchange of ideas about the ways each of you likes to learn.

Here is an example of how one protégé benefited from such an exchange:

"I learn best by first thinking about a new idea or practice, then acting on it. When I see what happens, I know whether or not it works. If it works, I want to learn more about why it works and what is happening for the children at the time. I guess this can be called applying theory to practice. My Mentor-Coach helps me understand what is going on and why it works for the children."

As early childhood professionals, we know that children learn best when they are following their own interests, when they can make choices, when they have hands-on experience, and when they can interact with others. Adults learn best under much the same circumstances.

—D. R. Sullivan (2003)

Common adult learning characteristics:

- Adult learners have different developmental, motivational, and experiential perspectives
- Adults are self-directed learners
- Adults are problem solvers
- Adults' motivation relates to real-life situations
- Adult learning is performance oriented
- Physical and psychological aspects of the learning environment affect the quality and facilitation of learning
- To be effective, the design and process of adult learning activities must reflect adult learning principles.

-Malcolm Knowles (1950)

Discussion Questions on How Adults Learn

1.	How do you like to learn best? Why?
2.	How can you discover how your protégé learns best?

Discussion Questions on Book Knowledge and Appreciation 1. What were the values your family had about reading and books? 2. In what ways have you held on to those values? In what ways have you changed? 3. How do you apply these values in your work with children and families?

READING WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS

The development of early language and literacy begins in the first three years of a child's life and links to a child's earliest experiences with books and stories.

The development of early literacy skills is essential. Looking at early literacy as a dynamic developmental process, you can see the connection and meaning between an infant's mouthing a book, a 2-year-old's handling a book, and a 5-year-old's turning pages.



STEP-Doc 1.2c: Developing Literacy Skills with Infants and Toddlers examines developmental characteristics of infants and toddlers and the ways these characteristics connect to early literacy and language practices.

Discussion Questions on STEP-Doc 1.2c:

1.	Which of the methods presented are you already using or supporting others to use?
2.	What methods would you like to learn more about?

You may want to use this series of questions as a conversation starter with your protégé.

VIDEO CLIP: Birth to Age 2 Reading

You will now view a video clip where Michaelynn, a toddler teacher in Chicago, sits on the floor to share a reading activity with two toddlers. She takes her lead from the toddlers, though she has goals in mind for both of them.

Reflection Questions for your Protégé

Here are some questions that you can use with your protégé in classrooms or in homes:

- **1.** What are some of your successes in developing literacy skills with infants and toddlers?
- **2.** How do you learn what parents are doing at home to encourage literacy in the child's home language?
- **3.** Are you conducting reading activities in your program that reflect what parents are doing at home? What are some of these activities?

4. Do you na	ive any ques	stions for t	ne parents	?	

Discussion Questions on Birth to Age 2 Reading

Your facilitator will ask you to work in pairs to answer these questions about what you saw in the video clip.

1. T	eacher's Strengths
•	 What was the teacher's manner and choice of setting? What was the teacher doing to encourage reading? What were her goals? What were some examples of positive interaction between the children and teacher?
2. C	Children's Strengths
•	How were the children participating?
•	What kinds of conversations were they having?
•	Did any literacy skills emerge? If so, what were they?
st	low can the Mentor-Coach's knowledge and experience with reading trategies or activities for toddlers help the protégé increase children's ngagement and participation?

READING WITH 3- TO 5-YEAR-OLDS

Reading a book with 3- to 5-year-olds is fun for children, parents, and staff. Stories capture the children's imaginations. Children enjoy the illustrations, the colorful characters, and the rhythm of the tale. When adults notice and respond to the interest and pleasure children find in books, the gift of knowledge is being shared. It is a great gift indeed. Take a moment to reflect on your own experiences with books as a child.

You can rely on the guidance in STEP-Doc 1.2d: Head Start Child Outcomes Framework for Book Knowledge and Appreciation.

BOOK KNOWLEDGE AND APPRECIATION

The child:

- Shows growing interest in reading-related activities such as asking to have a favorite book to read; choosing to look at books; drawing pictures based on stories; asking to take books home; going to the library; and engaging in pretend-reading with other children
- Shows growing interest and involvement in listening to and discussing a variety of fiction and nonfiction books and poetry.

VIDEO CLIP: Reading with 3- to 5-Year-Olds

You will see a video featuring Jackie, a protégé, reading with a small group of	
children in a Chicago preschool classroom. During the reading, we hear Jackie	
ask open-ended questions, and questions that connect the books to the	
children's own experiences. Monica, Jackie's Mentor-Coach, is observing her	
during the activity.	



Discussion Questions on Reading with 3- to 5-Year-Olds

Unit 1: Building Relationships to Promote Child Literacy Outcomes

1.	What did you see in the video that were good examples of teaching children to know about and appreciate books?
2.	If Jackie were your protégé, and you observed the reading activity, how would you begin a follow-up meeting?
3.	What questions would you ask?

VIDEO CLIP: Debriefing a Shared Reading Session

You will now see a video that highlights ways to debrief a shared reading session. Monica, the Mentor-Coach, meets with Jackie after observing her, to discuss Jackie's goals for the children in the small-group reading activity. Monic provides information about the observation to Jackie. Monica describes some of	
her mentor-coaching approaches. She also engages in reflective inquiry about	
what Jackie might have done differently during the reading activity.	

Discussion Questions on Debriefing a Shared Reading Session

1.	In what ways does the video clip show that the Mentor-Coach and protégé have a supportive relationship?
2.	What are some indicators that the Mentor-Coach and protégé are learning from each other?



Children's play is one of the most effective contexts for learning concepts of print as well as other important literacy skills. Play is highly motivating for young children. Enriching play settings and experiences with environmental print and literacy tools plus having staff who support such play are effective ways to help children accomplish many literacy outcomes.

—Head Start Leader's Guide to Positive Child Outcomes (2003)

PRINT AWARENESS AND CONCEPTS

You will be answering the following two questions in this discussion.		
1. How are print awareness and concepts emphasized in your program?		
-		
2. Describe some examples or stories from your program about successful strategies Mentor-Coaches use to promote print awareness and concepts with protégés.		
After you read STEP-Doc 1.2d: Book Knowledge and Appreciation and STEP-Doc 1.2e: Print Awareness and Concepts, use this space for your learning center ideas. What do you expect to find in a print-rich early learning environment?		

THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

With your facilitator, think back on the information in this module:

- Elements to build and support trusting mentor-coaching relationships
- Sharing and appreciating values
- Deepening awareness of and applying culturally sensitive practices
- Effective communication with protégés through reflective inquiry
- Self-reflection and overcoming biases
- Understanding how adults learn
- Supporting early literacy and language development with infants, toddlers and 3- to 5-year-olds.

Take a few moments to reflect on these questions:

4.	What are one or two of your biggest challenges? How will you address them?
3.	What would you like to change or add to what you do already?
2.	What mentor-coaching skills are you already using to build effective relationships?
1.	current practice as a Mentor-Coach?

Based on your reflections, begin your *Steps to Success* Professional Development Plan for Unit 1. Identify what mentor-coaching skills you would like to strengthen, what you will need, and how you will know that you are successful.

WRAP-UP

Be sure to complete your **Professional Development Plan** and reflect on your mentor-coaching skills for Unit 1.

Look at the **Unit 1 References**, the **Steps to Success Resources** and **Other Resources** listed at the end of this Manual for ideas about further readings and supports.

Remember that you will be completing a self-assessment exercise as you begin Unit 2.

STEP-Doc 1.2a: Ten Keys to Culturally Sensitive Child Care

- 1. Provide Cultural Consistency. Child care should be in harmony with what goes on at home. Young children need to feel good about where they come from. In culturally consistent care, things are done in a manner that follows the form and style of what the child is familiar with at home. The child experiences similar patterns of care, senses the connection between child care and home, and, as a result, feels more secure.
- 2. Work Toward Representative Staffing. An effective way to provide culturally consistent care is to employ caregivers who are of the same culture and speak the same language as the children served. When the caregiver reflects the culture of the child, the parent and caregiver are more likely to have a common vision of the person they want the child to become. However, having caregivers from the same background of the children served is not enough. What is needed is cultural representation at all levels of staff and management. With representative staffing and management, the home culture becomes a natural part of child care practice.
- 3. Create Small Groups. All infants benefit when they receive care in a small group. Large groups can be chaotic and confusing, and they are even more so when the children cared for follow different customs and speak different languages. With small groups, caregivers have a manageable number of cultures to relate to. As a result, many misunderstandings can be averted.
- 4. Use the Home Language. Communication between a caregiver and a young child in the child's home language supports the child's identification with her or his family and culture. In contrast, in English-only child care settings, a child may come to reject the language spoken at home if it is not English. In addition to strengthening the connection between home and child care, when caregivers use and understand the home language, an infant has an easier time getting his or her needs met. Having their words understood increases children's feelings of power and confidence.

Many child care programs have not yet achieved the goal of staffing with home-language speakers. In these settings, caregivers need to be extra sensitive in order to read and respond appropriately to children's messages. Under all circumstances, it is crucial that caregivers [be] able to communicate in a common language with each child's parents. If a

parent does not speak the language of the child care setting, all written information from the program should be translated into the family's language. An interpreter should also always be available to ensure ongoing communication with the family.

- 5. Make Environments Relevant. The environment and materials of a child care program should reflect the children and their cultures. By seeing pictures of themselves, their families, and their communities, children are given the message that who they are and where they come from is valued. However, artwork, photographs, music, food, and clothes do not create cultural continuity by themselves. Model programs aim to help young children feel at home. Rather than teaching about the cultures of the world, these programs develop an environment that focuses on the families they serve.
- 6. Uncover Your Cultural Beliefs. By exploring your own background, you can see the roots of some of your child care practices. Even simple acts of daily care reflect your cultural values. For example, if you were raised to feel that early mastery of skills is important, you may make feeding time a training experience for an infant, a time for skill building. If you grew up in a culture where the availability of food was a concern, you may be inclined to give children the message that foods are for eating and should never be wasted.

No matter what routine you are carrying out, your values about it are rooted in your childhood, your child care training, and other cultural influences. An important key to cultural sensitivity is recognizing the values reflected in your everyday actions and understanding that you are transmitting them to the children and families in your care.

7. Be Open to the Perspectives of Others. An awareness of multiple perspectives on childrearing leads to respect for others' beliefs and a clear understanding of your own. You may disagree with a parent about something (for example, the value of messy play) because of a cultural difference, rather than because it is an issue of ultimate right or wrong. In other words, what is naturally right for one person may not be naturally right for everyone. The more we learn about childrearing practices, the more we find there are fewer universals than once thought. In light of the diversity in caregiving practice, it is important not to jump to quick conclusions about the proper ways to do things. The caregiver who understands that good child care can be done in more than one way is in a better position to provide care that is familiar and comfortable to each child.

- 8. Seek Out Cultural and Family Information. Gathering information is an essential part of culturally sensitive child care. Frequent conversations with parents give you a feel for how things are done at home and what is important to the parents. It is helpful to read about the cultural heritage of families you serve and then check with them to see if what you learned through reading accurately portrays their beliefs and practices. Another good way to gather information is by visiting the communities and homes of the children. If a family is open to the idea of a home visit, a lot can be learned. In sum, the more you make yourself available to parents, both in the child care setting and in the community, the better they will come to know you, and the more likely they will be to share with you their family's concerns and values.
- 9. Clarify Values. Sometimes regular communication with a family breaks down due to a misunderstanding. When you find yourself confused about a family's actions, or in disagreement with a family member, try to have an open discussion with the family. This will often lead to the clarification of values, both the family's and yours. At the heart of the process of clarifying values is what is best for the child.
- 10. Negotiate Cultural Conflicts. Negotiation of differences with families is an essential part of the parent-caregiver relationship. Yet, negotiation does not always go smoothly. It is easy to fall into the trap of trying to persuade a parent to behave differently with her or his child. Nevertheless, such an approach to negotiation defeats its purpose. Negotiation is neither forcing one's position nor having to agree to do something that goes against one's fundamental values, but rather listening and coming to an agreement that takes both people's values into consideration. It is always a balancing act. Sometimes you may stumble, but you have to keep trying to reach a mutual understanding. By making a commitment to negotiate differences, child care staff and parents form a partnership, a give and take that leads to culturally sensitive care.

-Mangione, Lally, and Signer (1993)

STEP-Doc 1.2b: Questions that Promote Reflection

Questions that Promote Reflection

- Can you talk more about that?
- Why do you think that happened?
- What evidence do you have for that?
- What do you need?
- What have you tried before?
- Why did/didn't it work?
- What does this remind you of?
- What if it happened this way?
- How else could you approach that?
- What do you want to happen?
- When is the concern most pronounced?

Affirmations that Support Reflection

- You can find a way that works for you when you are ready.
- You can change if you want to.
- You can grow at your own pace.
- You can know what you need and ask for help.
- You can experiment and explore. I will help you.
- Your needs and reflections are important.
- I like talking to you.

—Bellm, Whitebook, and Hnatiuk (1997)

STEP-Doc 1.2c: Developing Literacy Skills with Infants and Toddlers

When babies are less than a year old they begin to:

- Focus their eyes and follow moving things.
- Notice the physical properties of objects.
- Seek out a response from a caregiver, such as attempting to make eye contact and responding with body language to words and smiles.
- Make sounds to express needs and in response to language.
- Indicate through sounds and body language that they understand some language.

To encourage development of early literacy skills in infants:

- Talk to babies while making eye contact. Use full sentences.
- Repeat back sounds a baby is making to encourage sound play.
- Sing to babies, gently rocking them to the rhythm of your song.
- Expose babies to many sounds.
- Show picture books to babies, talking about the pictures and pointing to objects on the page and in real life.
- Make different sounds. Let babies hear lots of different kinds of sounds and words.
- Let babies handle books.

When children are 1 to 2 years old, they begin to:

- See and remember how things are put together
- Say the names of things (daddy, bird, cat)
- Use short sentences (Want toy. Go potty.)
- Recognize that pictures are symbols of real objects.

Developing Literacy Skills with Infants and Toddlers (continued)

To encourage development of early literacy skills in toddlers:

- Read picture books and beginning word books to children.
- Say the names of objects the child sees in a book and plays with, and make the connection between pictures in books and real objects.
- Make books that have photographs of the children themselves and of real experiences the children have had.
- Choose books that use repeating phrases or words that a child can anticipate.
- Talk about sequences of events as they occur (e.g., "Before we eat, we wash our hands, and then we dry them, and then we come and sit at the table").
- Sing and chant with children. Do finger plays that have a predictable sequence.
- Let children explore nesting toys, blocks, and puzzles. They teach children sequencing and how parts fit together to make up a whole.

Developing Literacy Skills with Infants and Toddlers (continued)

When children begin to name things in pictures, ask questions about the story:

- What do you think will happen next?
- Who is this?
- Are you like the boy in the story?
- Why do you think the girl is smiling?
- What color is this?
- What is this?

Show children written words for things they say. Draw with children and write down their descriptions of pictures. Use puzzles and other manipulatives and talk about them as you use them.

Guidelines for Home Visiting

Each home visit should focus on the parent as the child's most important relationship and first teacher, and, through the parent, focus on the needs of the child. Child development experiences, which focus on the relationship and interaction between the parent and child, should occur during each home visit.

—Development Services During Home Visits and Socialization in Early Head Start Home-Based Programs Option (p.10, 2001)

STEP-Doc 1.2d: Book Knowledge and Appreciation

The Head Start Leaders Guide to Positive Child Outcomes introduces this Head Start domain element by reminding us that "children who are motivated to read show interest in books and reading, connect reading to events to real life, and experience both the pleasure and power of reading."

In this STEP-Doc you will find activities and suggestions for each of the four indicators of Book Awareness and Knowledge.

HEAD START OUTCOME

Shows growing interest and involvement in listening to and discussing a variety of fiction and nonfiction books and poetry.

- Read to one child at a time on your lap or snuggled close by, or in small groups of three to six children sitting close to you, where they can see and touch the book and develop positive feelings about reading.
- Make sure literacy experiences are fun, meaningful to the children, and interesting.
- Read to children several times every day, expressively and enthusiastically.
- Read the same book repeatedly, if the children request it.
- Upon second and subsequent readings, let children help turn the pages.
- Develop vocabulary by talking about the illustrations in second and subsequent readings.
- Present a range of different books to children: predictable books (using repetitive phrases, predictable language, and enabling children to join in); books with few words on a page; high-quality, award-winning literature; fiction; nonfiction; poetry, and, books with photos, drawings, paintings.
- Provide an inviting, cozy, comfortable library area, stocked with at least five books per child, two to three per child on display at one time.

- Display books attractively on open shelves, with covers facing forward, accessible for children to make their selections.
- Make sure that books in the classroom reflect children's cultures, home languages, and identities.
- Let children borrow books to take home or receive books to keep.

Teachers reading to a group of children should always read the story to themselves first. They should know the story well enough to be able to read it to the children while holding the book up so that all children can see the pictures.

- Help parents recognize and appreciate that a child's ability to say the words to a story back from memory is "reading" for a 3- or 4-year-old.
- Remind parents that children do best when surrounded by a language-rich environment. This means that adults talk with and to children. Language begins in connection to the everyday, familiar experiences that children have. When visiting a home, model this behavior.
- Before the child heads off to school, suggest that parents try asking,
 "What do you think you will do in school today?" "Do you think you might build with blocks?" Or, "What friends do you think you will see today?"
- Wordless picture books are great for parents who read another language or have limited literacy skills. There are no wrong answers, and parents as well as children can create the story from the pictures.

HEAD START OUTCOME

Shows growing interest in reading-related activities such as asking to have a favorite book to read, choosing to look at books, drawing pictures based on stories, asking to take books home, going to the library, and engaging in pretend-reading with other children.

- Plan times during the day when children select their own books to look at alone or with a friend.
- Use a shared reading technique: Once children have heard repetitive stories (such as "Brown Bear, Brown Bear" or "Mrs. Wishy Washy") several times, encourage them to repeat the repetitive parts with you.
- Think about different endings to the story. Have children illustrate their ending and dictate their ideas about it.
- Have children vote on their favorite character in the story.
- Have a story on tape or CD ready in the listening center along with several copies of the book for children to listen to and to follow along with their friends. Add props.
- Put books in various areas of the classroom, such as in the block and puzzle areas.
- Integrate books in other areas of the curriculum, including literature related to the creative arts, science (e.g., books about weather or the seasons), and math (e.g., counting books, books showing one-to-one correspondence of objects to numerals).

- Provide parents with the opportunity to get a library card. Encourage them
 to take their child to the library to take out books and attend story hours.
- Support parents in telling stories, reading to children, and talking about books at home.

• Remind parents to encourage their children to read along with them or have them read alternate pages.

HEAD START OUTCOME

Demonstrates progress in abilities to retell and dictate stories from books and experiences; to act out stories in dramatic play; to predict what will happen next.

- Pose questions, ask children to predict what will happen, and notice cause and effect situations.
- Have a child tell the story while others place characters on a flannel board or act out the scenes with puppets.
- Ask "what if" questions. This may encourage children to re-write the story with a different ending or draw and dictate something about their favorite part of the story.
- Create story boxes filled with appropriate props for the dramatic play area so that children can act out a story.

Guidelines for Home Visiting

Parents provide a wealth of learning for children without even trying. When parents use language to describe what they see, their feelings and how they solve problems they provide rich experiences in narration and prediction.

 For example on a walk or a car ride to the supermarket parents can talk about what they see, what is new of different, where they are going or what they will be doing next. They can point out signs and labels while driving or in the supermarket.

HEAD START OUTCOME

Progresses in learning how to handle and care for books, knowing to view one page at a time in sequence and from front to back, [and] understanding that a book has a title, author, and illustrator.

- Use the word *title* as you introduce the title of the book.
- Identify the author and talk about what an author is.
- Talk with children about their favorite books and authors. Encourage children to write or send e-mail to authors. Use the Internet to get more information about authors' lives and work.
- Identify the illustrator and talk about what an illustrator does.
- Point to the words as you read, to show how print flows from left to right and top to bottom and wraps from one line to the next.
- Point out where to start reading on a page and where the words end on an individual page.
- Emphasize turning pages from front to back.

- Teach children how to properly care for and handle books, protect the spines, turn pages slowly so they do not tear, and, when necessary, participate in repairing books as needed. (Model respect and careful handling of books.)
- If a child is not yet interested in books, include photograph albums with pictures of the children.
- Create an "All About Me" book, with parents contributing family photographs, information, and stories about their child.
- Share samples of age-appropriate books for children from birth to age five.
 A sample book can be one made of cloth that contains colorful images and different textures. Encourage infants and toddlers to touch the cloth book and feel the different textures on each page.
- Sing stories from books to babies, showing them the pages and using a free hand to draw attention to the images in the book.

STEP-Doc 1.2e: Print Awareness and Concepts

HEAD START OUTCOME

Children show increasing awareness of print in classroom, home, and community settings.

 Use print that children will find meaningful as much as possible in the classroom and home.

Examples in the classroom: menus, order pads, and "restaurant" checks; charts, prescription pads, and cards for the "doctor's office" or "hospital"; builder's plans, construction and street signs, and books for the block area; magazines, shopping lists, and stationery in the "house"; cookbooks and recipe cards for the "kitchen"; directories, timetables, and maps in the "bus station," "train station," or "car."

 Encourage parents to use print-related items in activities with children at home.

- Encourage parents to let children help with grocery lists by suggesting items for the list or by making their own "kid-writing" list.
- Suggest to parents that children may make a sign for their bedroom door, and if interested they may make signs for each room in the house or apartment.
- Children can learn to "read" food boxes and cans. Encourage parents to point out words and logos on cereal boxes, soup cans, cake mixes, macaroni and cheese boxes, other cultural food packaging, etc.
- Remind parents to accept their child's writing no matter what it looks like.
 Parents can model writing and talk about how the letter is formed.

Print Awareness and Concepts (continued)

HEAD START OUTCOME

Children develop growing understanding of the different functions of forms of print such as signs, letters, newspapers, lists, messages, and menus.

- Let children make their own signs or labels using pictures, letter-like symbols, letters, and their own "kid-writing."
- Engage children in writing or exploring the use of many different kinds of print for different purposes, such as signs, lists, stories, letters, and directions.

Guidelines for Home Visiting

- Urge parents to help children learn their address and telephone number.
- Suggest that parents show children how to recognize the names, numbers and letters on mail they receive.
- Remind parents that children can help to send cards for special occasions by signing their names and/or drawing a picture.

HEAD START OUTCOME

Children demonstrate increasing awareness of concepts of print, such as that reading English moves from top to bottom and from left to right, that speech can be written down, and that print conveys a message.

- Read aloud to small or large groups of children using big (oversized) books, so children can see the print and pictures clearly.
- Track print while reading to children from big books or languageexperience charts, pointing to specific words.

Print Awareness and Concepts (continued)

Guidelines for Home Visiting

- Encourage parents to follow the line of print with a finger when they read to their children. Also, encourage them to do this if they read in a language other than English.
- Suggest to parents that they help children write and spell the names of family members. They can make a song of the names and the spellings.
- Create a game with parents to play with children about looking for examples of print that are present throughout the home — for example, on appliances and on cans or boxes of food.

HEAD START OUTCOME

Child shows progress in recognizing the association between spoken and written words by following print as it is read aloud.

- Demonstrate the left-to-right and right-to-left sweep, and the top-to-bottom motion of print.
- A teacher may say "point to the words as I read them" to reinforce a child's knowledge of left-to-right motion.
- Demonstrate pleasure in reading the words and stories, pointing to pages and using facial expressions to capture children's interest and imagination.
- Use high-quality, developmentally appropriate computer software to introduce and reinforce concepts of print.

HEAD START OUTCOME

Child recognizes a word as a unit of print, or awareness that letters are grouped to form words, and that words are separated by spaces.

 When reading to children, especially in big books, or on languageexperience charts, point to individual words.

Print Awareness and Concepts (continued)

- Talk with children to assess their understanding of the concept of word.
 Ask them which is the first word in a sentence or which word starts with the first letter of their name.
- Expose all children to various images of print (in books, on walls, on labels) that reflect the diverse languages within the classroom.
- Provide many opportunities for children to write. As they write their own messages for their purposes, they will focus on the individual words they want to use.
- "Scaffold" children's writing by drawing lines for the number of words they want to write. ("You want to write, I love you. OK, that is three words. ____
 ______.")

Questions for Reflection

- **1.** What should you look for in a print-rich early learning environment?
- **2.** What can you ask your protégé to help him or her to become more aware of children's abilities to understand and use print?
- **3.** What resources can you provide to your protégé for developing children's awareness of print and their understanding of print-related concepts?

For Home Visitors

- 1. What are some examples of plans you have made with parents to promote print awareness and concepts in the home?
- 2. What resources or materials are available to give or loan to parents to enhance print awareness in the child's home language?

STEP-Doc 1.2f: Early Literacy Tips for Home Visitors on Reading with Infants and Toddlers

Home visitors can strengthen the parent-child relationship with respect to literacy by modeling and encouraging parents to:

- Read to children everyday
- Sit close to children and share books together
- Have a quiet, comfortable place to read
- Read at a pace that makes the child comfortable
- Let children turn the pages
- Keep books where children can reach them
- Let children select the book when possible
- Reread favorite stories often
- Get books to own and help children learn how to take care of them
- Turn off radios, TVs, and stereos while reading, to reduce distractions
- Be enthusiastic about books and reading
- Let children observe parents reading
- Take time for talking, even if the story takes longer to read. There is no one "right way" to read to a child.